



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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May 6, 2008

TO: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe 
Acting Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF SHERIFF'S CONTRACT PSYCHOLOGIST EXAMS**

At the February 6, 2008 meeting, your Board discussed the Sheriff's Department's (Sheriff or Department) decision to cease using one of its three contracted psychologists. The Sheriff uses the psychologists to evaluate Sheriff Deputy candidates and other custody-related positions. At the meeting, Sheriff management indicated that they stopped using one psychologist based on an analysis they prepared of the psychologist's pass/fail rates for applicants of various groups.

Sheriff management subsequently indicated that the decision was in part because they believed the psychologist was biased against applicants who had military experience and family in law enforcement. We were asked by the Board to review the statistics the Sheriff had to support their decision. In addition, the Board asked us to review statistics related to ethnic groups.

Sheriff Statistical Information

We asked the Sheriff to provide the statistical analysis they prepared to support their decision for our review. Sheriff management could not provide such analysis or other data to support their claim. The Sheriff also does not have any information on applicants' military experience or family in law enforcement that could be used to prepare such analysis.

Sheriff management indicated that their experience with the psychologists and their knowledge of numerous specific cases led them to believe that the psychologist in question was biased. We interviewed several current and former Personnel managers and some of them indicated that this psychologist may have had a bias against certain applicants. In addition, all the Personnel managers we interviewed stated that they had received numerous complaints from job applicants over a number of years about this psychologist's unprofessional demeanor and interviewing style. Other than these verbal feedback, Sheriff staff did not provide any data or documentation to support these issues/complaints.

Comparison of Psychologists' Exam Results – Attachment 1

The Sheriff's Personnel Tracking System includes the results of all psychological exams conducted by all three contract psychologists from 2000 to 2007. Based on the Sheriff's data, we calculated the pass/fail rates for each psychologist over the eight years (Attachment 1). The comparison indicates that the annual pass/fail rates for all of the psychologists varied over the eight years. However, the psychologist in question had a slightly higher overall fail rate than one of the other two psychologists. The third psychologist had a very low fail rate. These differences in pass/fail rates do not demonstrate inappropriate passing or failing of applicants by any of the psychologists. (The psychologist who the Sheriff ceased using is identified on all the Attachments as psychologist "C").

Results of Appeals – Attachment 2

Candidates who fail their initial psychological evaluation can appeal to the Chief Executive Office's Occupational Health Program. We obtained the results of these appeals from them to determine if there were any significant variances among the psychologists in the results of the appeals. Our comparison (Attachment 2) disclosed that the number and percentage of appealed cases overturned varied. However, the differences do not demonstrate any inappropriate passing or failing of applicants by any of the psychologists.

Comparison of Psychologists' Exam Results Based on Ethnicity – Attachment 3

The information we received from the Sheriff's Personnel Tracking System on applicants who passed/failed their psychological exams did include the ethnicity of candidates, and we compared the pass/fail rates for each psychologist by the ethnicity of the candidates (Attachment 3). Our review indicates that the psychologist in question had a significantly higher fail rate for candidates in some ethnic groups than the other two psychologists. It should be noted that the number of applicants in some ethnic groups is very small, and the result of passing or failing one candidate could significantly affect the reported pass/fail percentages.

Our analysis of the psychologists' overall pass/fail rates, and the pass fail/rates by ethnic group are based on the summary data provided by the Sheriff. The Sheriff indicated they obtained the data from the personnel files of the individual applicants. However, due to confidentiality issues, we were unable to audit the summary data.

Summary

The Sheriff did not have an analysis to substantiate their claim that the psychologist in question was biased against applicants who had military experience and/or family in law enforcement. In addition, while our comparisons of pass/fail rates for each psychologist, the percent of appeals overturned, and the pass/fail rates for ethnic groups showed some variances, they do not demonstrate inappropriate passing or failing of applicants by any of the psychologists.

While the Sheriff did not have any statistics or documentation showing bias, current and former Sheriff Personnel managers we interviewed expressed concerns that this psychologist may have had a bias against certain applicants. They also stated that they had received numerous complaints from applicants about this psychologist's unprofessional demeanor and interviewing style. We were unable to validate their statements.

We provided all of our statistical information to the County Office of Independent Review (OIR), which is currently reviewing the Sheriff's background investigations of Deputy Sheriff applicants and hiring standards. The OIR will report back to your Board independently.

We discussed our report with Sheriff management. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Jim Schneiderman at 626-293-1101.

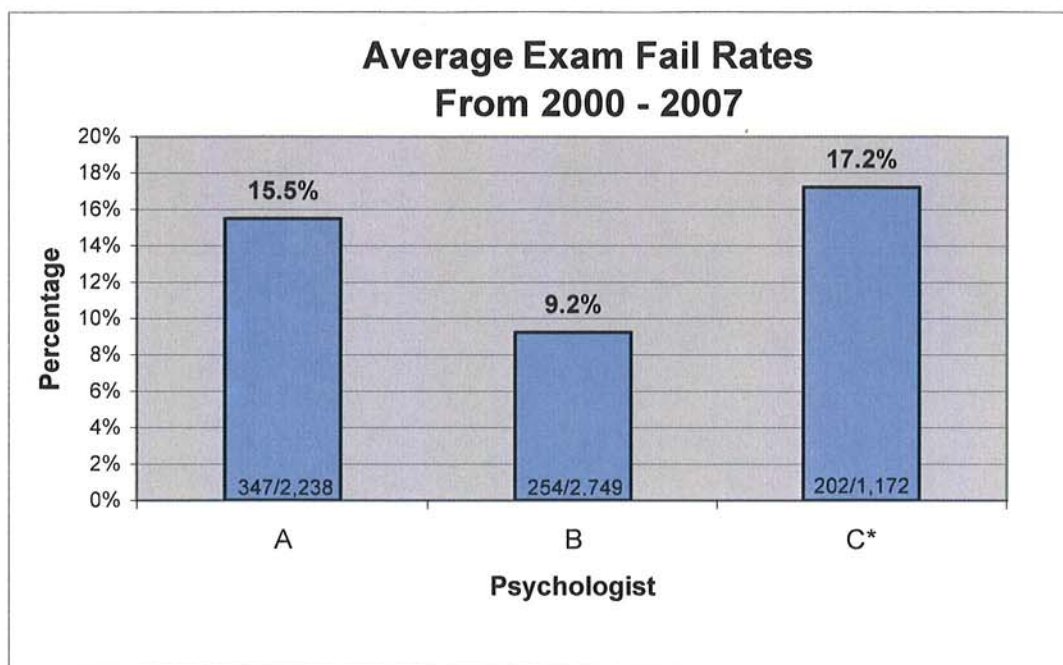
WLW:MMO

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff
Raymond G. Fortner, County Counsel
Michael J. Gennaco, Office of Independent Review
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Review of Sheriff's Contract Psychologist Exams **Psychological Exam Fail Rate Averages by Psychologist**

Source of Data: Sheriff's Department - Unaudited

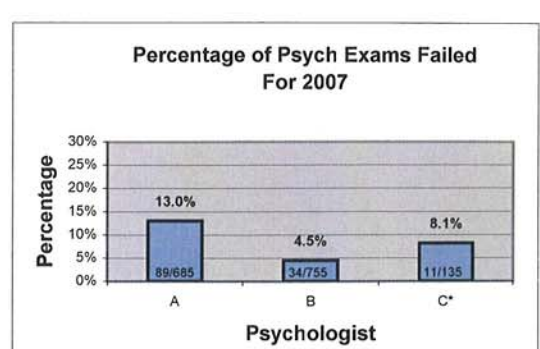
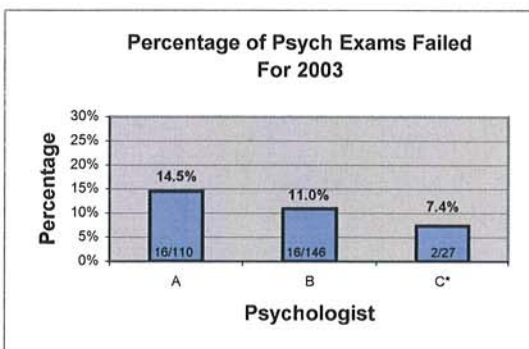
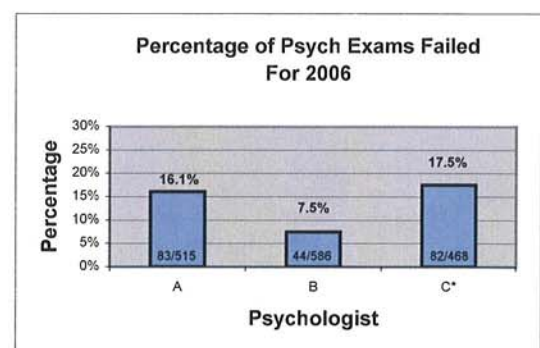
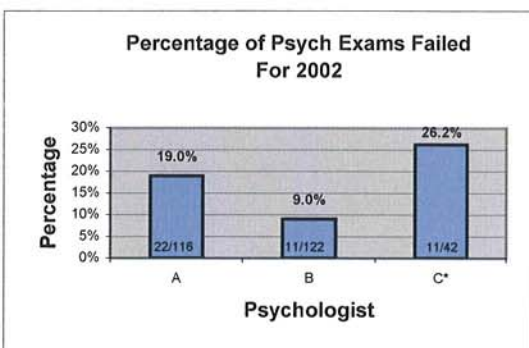
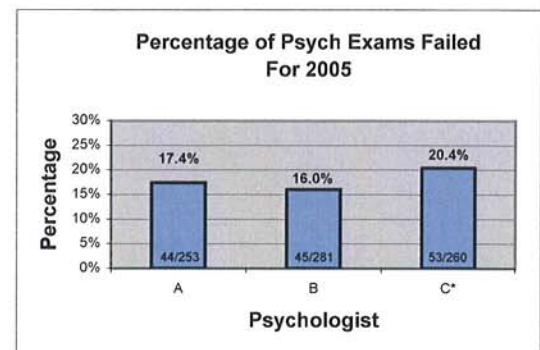
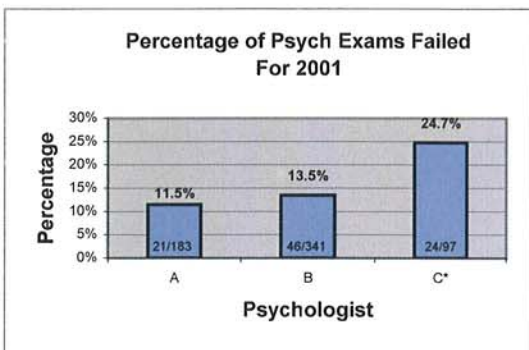
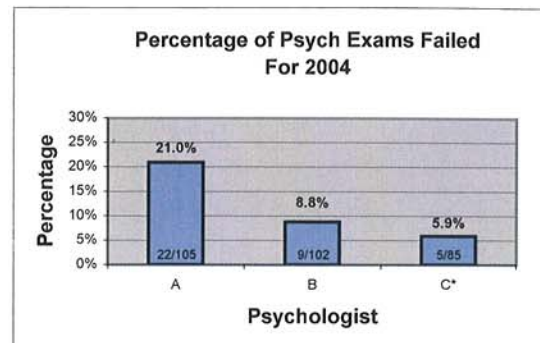
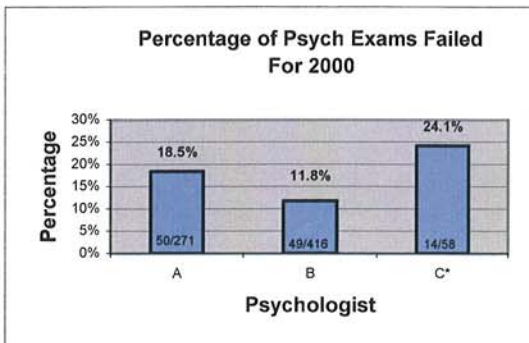


Year	Contractor	Fail	Pass	Total	Percentage Failed
2000 - 2007	A	347	1,891	2,238	15.5%
	B	254	2,495	2,749	9.2%
	C*	202	970	1,172	17.2%

* Contracted psychologist the Sheriff stopped using for Deputy psychological exams.

Review of Sheriff's Contract Psychologist Exams Psychological Exam Fail Rate Percentages by Year

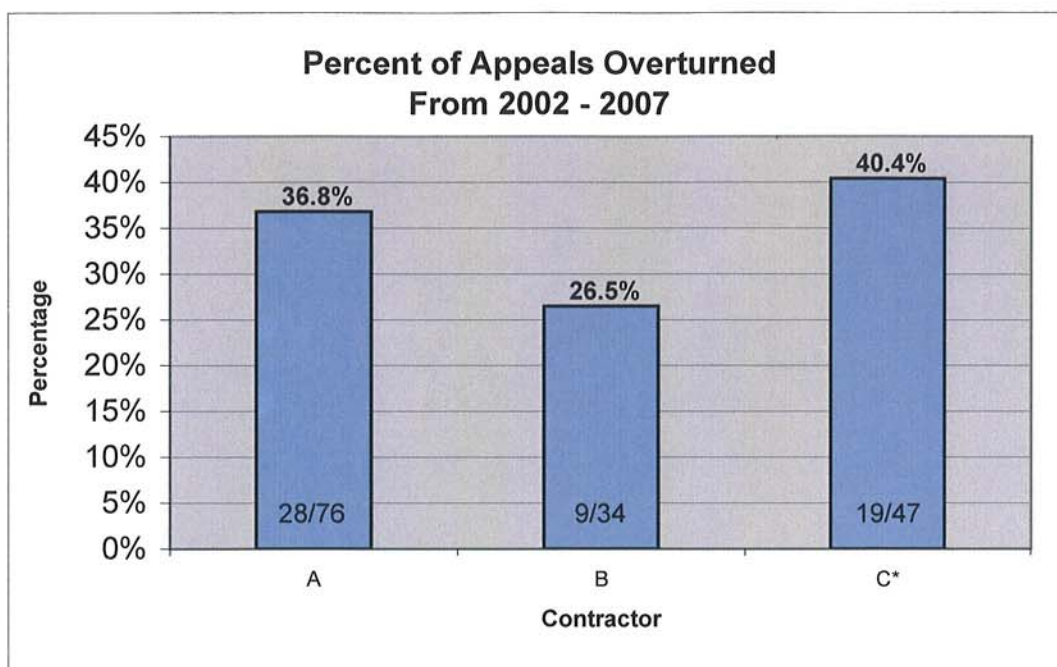
Source of Data: Sheriff's Dept.- Unaudited



* Contracted psychologist the Sheriff stopped using for Deputy psychological exams.

Review of Sheriff's Contract Psychologist Exams Psychological Exam Appeals

Source of Data: CEO Occupational Health Program - Unaudited

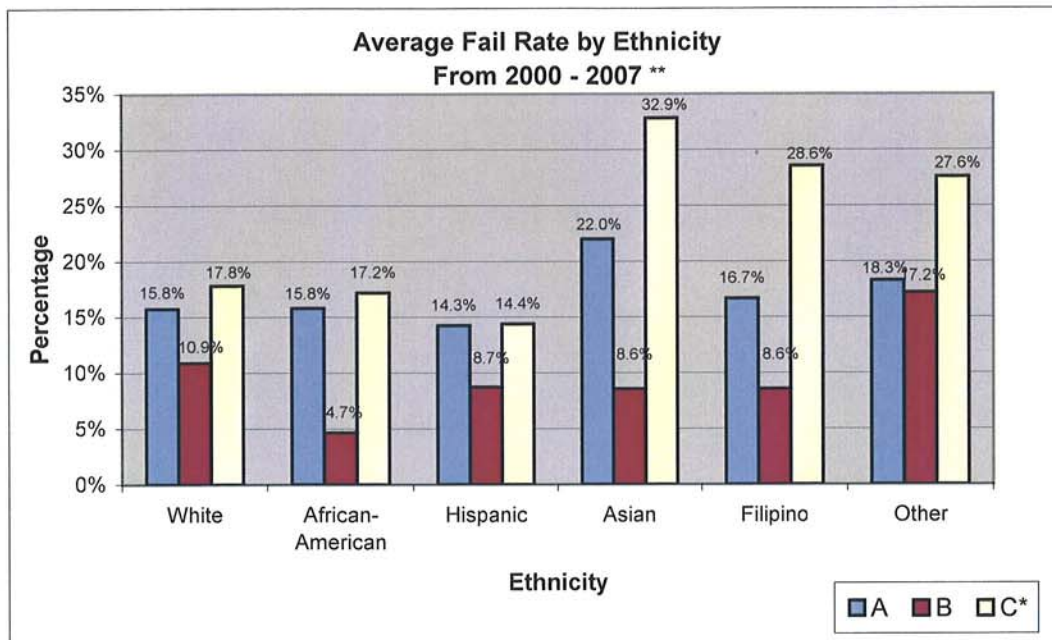


Year	Contractor	Overturned	Sustained	Total Number of Appeals	Percent of Apls Overturned
2002 - 2007	A	28	48	76	36.8%
	B	9	25	34	26.5%
	C*	19	28	47	40.4%

* Contracted psychologist the Sheriff stopped using for Deputy psychological exams.

Review of Sheriff's Contract Psychologist Exams
Average Sheriff's Psychological Exam Fail Rates by Ethnicity

Source of Data: Sheriff's Dept. - Unaudited



Contractor	Ethnicity	Fail	Pass	Total	Percentage Fail Rate	Pct of Total Cont Exams
A	White	132	705	837	15.8%	37.4%
	African-American	31	165	196	15.8%	8.8%
	Hispanic	139	836	975	14.3%	43.6%
	Asian	22	78	100	22.0%	4.5%
	Filipino	8	40	48	16.7%	2.1%
	Other	15	67	82	18.3%	3.7%
	Totals:	347	1,891	2,238	15.5%	100.0%
B	White	97	793	890	10.9%	32.4%
	African-American	12	246	258	4.7%	9.4%
	Hispanic	113	1,179	1,292	8.7%	47.0%
	Asian	15	160	175	8.6%	6.4%
	Filipino	6	64	70	8.6%	2.5%
	Other	11	53	64	17.2%	2.3%
	Totals:	254	2,495	2,749	9.2%	100.0%
C*	White	46	212	258	17.8%	22.0%
	African-American	22	106	128	17.2%	10.9%
	Hispanic	95	564	659	14.4%	56.2%
	Asian	23	47	70	32.9%	6.0%
	Filipino	8	20	28	28.6%	2.4%
	Other	8	21	29	27.6%	2.5%
	Totals:	202	970	1,172	17.2%	100.0%

* Contracted psychologist the Sheriff stopped using for Deputy psychological exams.

** It should be noted that some of the higher variances may also be attributed to less candidates screened of one ethnic group by a psychologist and/or fewer overall candidates of an ethnic group.